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C O N F I D E N T I A L VATICAN 001639

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/WE (DEBORAH MENNUTI)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/01/2012

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: MEPP: POPE GRAVELY CONCERNED, HAS MESSAGE FOR
PRESIDENT

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR JIM NICHOLSON FOR REASONS 1.5 (A) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) VATICAN FOREIGN MINISTER TAURAN UNEXPECTEDLY CALLED

AMBASSADOR NICHOLSON THIS MORNING. H HAD JUST CONCLUDED A MEETING WITH POPE JOHN PAU II WHO IS SHOCKED OVER REPORTED DEATH OF A CATHLIC PRIEST IN BETHLEHEM. THE PRIEST WAS REPORTEDY THE CHAPLAIN OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT BRIDGET AND WAS KILLED BY ISRAELI FIRE. TAURAN SAID THAT THE POPE HAS PERSONALLY REQUESTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR CONTACT PRESIDENT
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BUSH AND ASK HIM TO RESTRAIN THE ISRAELIS. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE VATICAN UNDERSTANDS THE ISRAELIS NEED FOR SELF-DEFENSE, BUT AT THIS POINT THE VATICAN DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ARAFAT CONTROLS THE MILITANTS. TAURAN ALSO RAISED TE NEED FOR THE IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT OF INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPERS.

[1](#)2. (C) TAURAN CONVOKED AMBASSADOR NICHOLSON TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TOMORROW, APRIL 3 AT 12 NOON TO FURTHER DISCUSS THE DETERIORATING SITUATION. IN ADDITION, TAURAN SAID THEY HAD INFORMATION OF A SERIOUS NATURE ON WHAT SOME ARAB NATIONS ARE PLANNING TO DO, AND WOULD SHARE IT TOMORROW.

[1](#)3. (C) ACTON REQUESTED: POST REQUESTS TALKING POINTS ON CURRENT U.S. POSITION AND PLANS BY OOB VATICAN TIME APRIL 3.
NICHOLSON

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